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SUBJECT: YEMENI REACTION TO US ELECTION: GREAT NATION,
MABROOK

¶1. On November 5, the Ambassador hosted a morning reception to give key post contacts the opportunity to watch the results of the US presidential elections with embassy officers. At that event and in EmbOffs' other meetings, the response to the elections has been overwhelmingly positive. Post,s interlocutors expressed their happiness, both with the President-Elect, and with an electoral system that would allow a member of what is seen as an oppressed minority to rise to the nation,s highest office.

¶2. Parliamentarian and member of the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) Nabil Basha told POL/E Chief that he felt Obama would be an excellent president and well-received in the Arab world. A member of Post's Office of Military Cooperation was stopped by a stranger and told, "if you elect Obama there will be fewer recruits for al-Qaeda." World Bank Senior Economist Ali Alabdulrazzaq told EconOff that an Obama presidency could serve to "soften some (negative) feelings" about the United States in the Arab world. Al-Jazeera's Sana'a Bureau Chief told ConOff, "This is a victory for America."

3 Other contacts saw the election of an African American as evidence that the United States is a land where the benefits of democracy are available to all. Parliamentarian Shawki al-Kahdi told the Embassy, "Obama winning is a clear indicator that America is a land of democracy whether we agree on its foreign policy or not." Secretary General Yassine Noman of the opposition Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) said this is a "Historic moment for a great nation. Once again America is an example for the world." GPC Parliamentarian Shawki Shamsan told POL/E Chief that the election of an African American "is an example to us, we can learn from you." Perhaps the most eloquent (and surely the briefest) comment on the election was a text message from Ali Saif Hassan of the Political Development Forum which read simply "Great Nation, Mabrook (congratulations.)"

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